

In-Delta Storage Program FAQ's

What is the Project proposal and what the Project could do?

The In-Delta Storage Project would provide capacity to store approximately 217,000 acre-feet of water in the south Delta for a wide array of water supply, water quality and ecosystem benefits. The project would include two storage islands (Webb Tract and Bacon Island) and two habitat islands (Holland Tract and Bouldin Island), similar to that proposed by Delta Wetlands over a decade ago, but would also include: new embankment design, consolidated inlet and outlet structures, new project operations and revised Habitat Management Plans. In addition to the water supply benefits, the project could provide: operational flexibility, water quality improvements, wildlife and habitat improvements, seismic stability for Delta levees, recreation, flood damage reduction and reduce levee maintenance expenses in the Delta.

The role of the habitat islands goes beyond mitigation as it would make improvements to the existing habitat by developing and protecting 9,000 acres of agricultural and wetlands on Holland Tract and Bouldin Island.

What are the local issues and how has DWR addressed them?

Seepage – The study recommends using interceptor wells with pumps along the reservoir island embankments to prevent seepage rates onto adjacent islands from increasing beyond their current rate.

Piping – Piping is water flow through cracks in the embankments caused by foundation settlement. A geotextile filter fabric measure was selected as a preferred solution to reduce the chance for piping and soil cement with Bentonite mix is proposed on the reservoir-side north and west facing shallow slopes for protection against wind and wave action.

Seismic –The seismic risk of implementation cannot be avoided, but is similar or better than all other projects already constructed in the Delta (Delta Cross Channel, CC Forebay, etc).

Flooding – If the project embankments fail due to an earthquake or high flood levels in the Delta, chances are other Delta levees will also fail.

Risk – The risk analysis concluded a minimal potential for loss-of-life and property damage. The Independent Board of Consultants concluded that the project could be implemented at an acceptable level of risk.

Economy – All area economic impacts including loss and creation of employment have been assessed and indicate a net positive impact on the Delta economy.

Exports may impact south Delta water levels –Barrier operations are included in modeling studies. Although present studies indicate minimal impact (3-inch drop near Middle River but typically the drop occurs when the barriers are not in operation), DWR will continue to eliminate possibility of any adverse impacts on south Delta water levels.

Fear of a “Chain of Lakes” – A “Chain of Lakes” (flooding Delta islands in sequence such that there is a direct connection from the Sacramento River to Clifton Court Forebay) is not considered in the CALFED ROD. Only two islands are being used for storage in the In-Delta Project and include specific EWA and ERP benefits for the Delta.

How does DWR plan to address the uncertainties related to Delta water quality?

Additional water quality field and modeling evaluations are necessary to refine project operations and eliminate uncertainties related to organic carbon, dissolved oxygen and temperature. Now that the Science

Panel has provided recommendations to DWR, depending on the current budget crisis and funding, DWR would undertake field experiments and do detailed modeling evaluations.

Have the project's environmental impacts been evaluated?

CEQA and NEPA environmental documents would be prepared to cover the changes proposed by In-Delta Storage Project to the Delta Wetlands Project and to update environmental information. Consultations with regulatory and resource agencies may be necessary to update and modify environmental permits and authorizations issued for the Delta Wetlands Project. The environmental impacts of the Delta Wetlands Project were evaluated in an EIR/EIS, prepared by the SWRCB and Corp of Engineers.

How does DWR plan to identify beneficiaries?

DWR has prepared basic information related to the operational scenarios which could be used by potential beneficiaries in conducting their own analyses. Process for formal identification of the beneficiaries begins with release of Draft Feasibility study reports.

What are the budget constraints in funding?

Studies are being conducted with Prop. 50 Funding. Reductions in funding would impact future water quality and environmental documentation work.

Why is Federal Feasibility Authority lacking?

Federal Feasibility Authority was requested by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in 2001. However, it was not supported by Congressman Richard Pombo and was not authorized by Congress.

What are known benefits and costs of the Project?

In-Delta Storage could be operated in a wide variety of ways to produce differing benefits. DWR evaluated three sample operating scenarios. These scenarios emphasized combinations of the following operational priorities: deliveries to urban and agricultural water users, assets for the Environmental Water Account, and contributions to the Environmental Restoration Program Delta flow targets. Total long-term average annual water supply improvements provided by In-Delta Storage under these scenarios ranged from 124 to 136 TAF. Total average annual water supply improvements during dry periods ranged from 59 to 62 TAF. In addition, there are other benefits that have not yet been quantified, such as additional system operational flexibility, water quality improvements, wildlife and habitat improvements and seismic stability for Delta levees. Also, additional benefits would come from recreation, flood damage reduction and avoided levee maintenance.

Equivalent annual project cost is \$60 million and DWR should work with economic experts and stakeholders to improve procedures for assessment of benefits. All of the benefits discussed in this report need to be quantified for a better numerical comparison of benefits and costs.

What are the next steps?

After reviews by public, Bay-Delta Public Advisory Committee and the Bay-Delta Authority, DWR will decide future action plan for this project.